

Remembering a great Aruba cultural benefactor

ORANJESTAD--The Aruba Community was deeply saddened with the passing away last week of Dr. Johan Hartog, the island's first librarian and co-founder of the Aruba Cultural Center Foundation a statement by the foundation states.

Right after the Second World War, the movement in Holland was to maintain and increase cultural ties with Indonesia, Surinam and the Dutch Antillian islands. Many saw the possibility of creating a foundation working toward that goal. The foundation was called Sticusa (Foundation Cultural Cooperation).

In 1948, the then Sticusa Director Clemens Meuleman visited Curaçao with the objective to establish branches of Sticusa. Dr. Hartog arrived in Curaçao a year later and was approached by Mr. Meuleman to help stimulate the formation of such centers. In Aruba, Dr. Hartog was introduced to Wim Lampe, Jan Pauw, Folkert Steenmeijer, Richard Robles and Rolando Palm who welcomed such an idea.

And, on December 23, 1949, the Aruba Cultural Foundation —CCA— was founded. Dr. Hartog didn't form part of the first board but always played a crucial role in the maintenance of cultural ties between Holland and The Netherlands Antilles.

The CCA was able to realize projects such as awarding scholarships for dance, theater, and music, as well as effecting cultural exchange projects, such as exhibitions.

Dr. Hartog, besides his task as librarian, was always involved in the island's cultural development. Projects, he helped realize are the CCA building, the San Nicolas Art School, Community Centers, and the restoration of the Fort Zoutman and Willem III Tower. Dr. Hartog also wrote a book on the history of the tower and fort.

The CCA board greatly appreciates individuals like Dr. Hartog and other pioneers who worked toward the promotion of the Aruba culture, locally and internationally, the statement concludes.